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ANALYSIS OF GENESIS II., III.

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THE narrative of the expulsion of man from Eden in Gen. ii., iii., in its present form, is generally admitted to be a well-connected whole. The story advances from the beginning almost without pause, and the author has skilfully selected his material so as to lead up to the results which he describes at the end of his narrative. He is a literary artist, who shows his power both by his charm of style and by the unity he has given to his narrative. This, however, does not exclude the supposition that the present narrative is composite. The author may be an editor, who has retouched the less perfect work of a predecessor; or he or some earlier writer may have gathered material from several sources, and combined different narratives into one story; or various traditions, growing up under diverse conditions, may have coalesced; or the present narrative may be the result of several or of all of these processes — the final redactor, for example, may have made selections from narratives, already worked over by tradition and by the pen, and treated them in his own way for a particular purpose.

In fact, several modern critics, while recognizing the general unitary character of the narrative, have taken exception to particular passages, or suggested that it is only part of a longer narration. Ewald thinks that the topographical description of paradise (ii. 10–14) is a later insertion; and, on the other hand, that the original narrative con-

tained (between verses 7 and 8 of chapter ii.) an account of the creation of the stars, that some divine command to the man had preceded that of ii. 16, and that the true author of our section is the fourth narrator of the primeval history, who both assumed the existence of earlier works and drew on them at his pleasure for his material (*Lehre der Bibel von Gott*, III. 72 n., 73 n., 151). Dillmann (*Die Genesis*, 2d ed.) looks on verses 10–14 and 8^b of chapter ii. as of doubtful genuineness. Reuss (*La Bible*) brackets ii. 10–14, iii. 20 (and doubtfully ii. 15), and in ii. 19 the words נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה, and would read in ii. 8 גֶּן עֵדֶן, “a garden of delight.” Budde (*Biblische Urgeschichte*, pp. 46 ff.) further excludes the tree of life from the original form, on the ground that the body of the narrative knows only the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (the text of ii. 9 showing that it contained originally only one of the two trees), and that the function of the tree of life contradicts the author’s conception that man’s life is the breath of God (verse 7). He also cites Studer and Lenormant (p. 48 n.) as having found something disturbing in the introduction of this tree. Budde’s argument seems to me satisfactory, and I refer to his book for the detailed proof. Clearly, also, iii. 20 (the naming of the woman and the etymology of her name) interrupts the narrative, and may be excluded. It is less obvious that the topographical description of the garden is a later addition. The narrative does undoubtedly gain in continuity and force by the omission of verses 10–14 and verse 15; then the prohibition follows immediately on the description of the tree in the midst of the garden; verse 15 adds nothing to 8^b except the statement that the man was to till and keep the garden — a duty of small significance in a garden of fruit-trees. Yet, on the other hand, the newly-discovered Babylonian creation-story, which is markedly similar to our narrative, seems to include an abode of the gods, which may be compared with the garden. Some expressions in the Babylonian account appear to offer support to Reuss’s emendation, “garden of delight.” But these emendations, if accepted, leave the narrative substantially intact, and we have now to inquire whether it contains indications of a combination of several different stories.

Let us repeat that the history, as it stands, has an admirable unity. It has been observed by critics (Reuss, Nöldeke, Dillmann) that the author is a philosopher, who is dealing mainly with certain phenomena of life. His chief interest is not in the creation of the world, or of man or woman (his narrative is by no means a history of creation),

nor in the garden, but in the consequences of the expulsion. Here he finds the explanation of birth, toil, death, of clothing, of the physical peculiarities of the mysterious serpent. In like manner he explains, in passing, the closeness of the marriage-tie from the manner of woman's creation. Reuss suggests that this representation (the creation from the rib) may have been devised by him [or, let us say, may have grown up naturally] out of the common expression "bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh," or "my bone and flesh" (2 Sam. v. 1), used to denote kinship. The author brings out his thesis in the latter half of chapter iii., and what precedes is introductory. The evils of life, he would point out, come from man's expulsion from a garden of ease; he must then tell how the expulsion happened, and to this end must describe the tree and the serpent and the woman; and so he begins by an exposition of the theatre and the persons of the drama. What he wishes to bring out is, that man, created by God and placed in a pleasant garden, was at first in a state of childlike, ignorant happiness, but, displeasing God, was driven away, and incurred these present penalties of life.

This history is not an allegory or a parable. The allegorical interpretation is a favorite one with those who see that our author is a philosopher, and cannot bring themselves to believe that so advanced an Israelitish writer could have held literally to such crudities. But the text offers no support to this manner of interpretation. As the penalties of chapter iii. are simple historical realities for the author, so the course of events to which he ascribes them has a similar historical character in his mind. The serpent of the beguilement is the serpent of the curse, and the tree is as real as the man.

Nor is there exegetical or other ground for saying that because the story has a heathenish tone it must therefore be looked on as foreign to Israelitish thought, an infusion from outside sources. It was written by a Jew, and received into a canonical book, at a time when allegorical interpretation was hardly in existence. If derived from a foreign source, it was accepted as true by the Jews. Similar mythical and half-mythical narratives and ideas are found elsewhere in the Old Testament (Gen. vi., xi.; Lev. xvi.; Job iii.; Ps. xviii.), and we have no right to assume that these were foreign to Israelitish modes of thought.

One other introductory remark may be made. The author's object is to explain the existing facts of birth, toil, and death. It seems clear

that he does not intend to explain the origin of sin. He mentions the first historical occurrence of disobedience to a divine command, but he says and implies nothing of special inward moral-religious experience. The first man is for him like any other man; he comes into existence with a nature that makes sin possible. What happens to him is a change not in his moral tendencies and capacities, but in his external surroundings and experiences. The succeeding history does not describe any perversion of man's spiritual nature. Abel and Enoch are wholly well-pleasing in the sight of God. After the eating of the fruit the man hides from God not because he feels that he has sinned, but because he now knows that he is naked. The history moves in this regard in the sphere of non-moral experiences.

To come, now, to the critical examination of the section, there appear to be certain discrepancies in the representations as they now stand, and the question is how these may be best accounted for.

1. Let us first look at the penalty described in the text. Here two points call for explanation—the non-infliction of the penalty and its extension. The death threatened in ii. 17 does not follow on the eating of the fruit, in iii. 6; the immediate result is enlightenment of feeling; and, on the other hand, in iii. 16–19, other punishments beside death are denounced against the human pair, and the serpent also suffers for his share in the affair.

The first of these difficulties has been variously met. It is said that the “thou shalt die” means “thou shalt become mortal,” the assumption thus being that man was created immortal; but to this the answer is that the Hebrew expression will not bear this interpretation. The words “In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt die” are clear enough; they mean immediate death, and not the withdrawal of immortality. The same expression occurs in the account of Solomon's dealing with Shimei (1 Kings ii. 37), and the sentence is executed as soon as the offender can be arrested (verse 46). In the present case there was no need for delay. This sense of the expression must be maintained on grammatical grounds, even if it be held that Gen. iii. 19 gives our author's interpretation: “Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return,” that is, “Thou shalt die at a certain time according to my ordination.” This supposition, however, is unnecessary; the author may here, indeed, have in mind the fact of human mortality, but his words, as will be pointed out below, need not be regarded as an interpretation of the expression in question. It may be added that the Old Testament

everywhere else assumes mortality as inherent in human nature, and shows no consciousness of a transformation of physiological conditions, or of acquaintance with this narrative; the supposed references in Hosea vi. 7 and Job xxxi. 33 have been generally given up. The old Hebrew view was that man was mortal by his constitution (2 Sam. xiv. 14).

Another interpretation of the death-sentence is, that it is first moral-spiritual and then physical, the death of the soul carrying with it the death of the body. This is contradicted by the text of our section, as well as by the following narratives. Our author himself clearly states his opinion (iii. 19) as to the character of the death intended; he speaks of the cessation of bodily life, and says nothing of any other sort of death. The editor who added the reference to the tree of life ascribes to it (iii. 22) the power of conferring bodily immortality, and thus assumes that the sentence involved only physical death. So far from imputing moral blame to the man, God, in this concluding paragraph, declares that he has become as one of the Elohim-beings in the knowledge of good and evil, and gives this as the reason for depriving him of access to the tree of life. In the whole section there is no hint of depravation of soul, nor is such an idea found in the following Yahwistic sections, where Abel and Noah are thoroughly good men.

Allied to this is Ewald's view (*Lehre*, iii. pp. 159, 160), that God, as merciful Judge, relaxed the punishment; and further, that every sin, as transgression of the known will of God, necessarily works destruction, first of soul and then of body. Of a relaxation of the penalty there is no word in the text. On the contrary, the author represents the punishment as carried out to the full (chapter iii.).

These explanations, contradicting the plain sense of the text-words, are untenable. The narrative, as it stands, declares that the eating of the fruit would be followed by instant death. This declaration may be understood in two ways: the Deity may mean to say that the natural effect of the fruit will be to cause death; or he may mean that he himself, quite apart from any property of the tree, will inflict death as a punishment for disobedience.

The first of these interpretations is favored by the language and tone of the serpent in iii. 1-5. The narrative here appears to be abridged from a longer story. Something not mentioned leads the serpent to ask the woman whether all the trees of the garden had been prohibited to her and to the man. She replies that the prohi-

bition extended to only one tree, and that death was to be the result of eating its fruit. He answers positively that this is not true; that, on the contrary, the effect will be enlightenment and elevation to equality with the gods. Here he assumes that the threat of death refers to the natural property of the tree, which the Deity had represented as fatal, but he affirms to be healthful. So far as the inherent quality of the fruit is concerned, the result confirms the statement of the serpent. The man and the woman do not die, and their eyes are enlightened. This is recognized, also, as the natural effect of the tree, in iii. 22, where the punishment inflicted seems to be simply expulsion from the garden; and the woman appears (iii. 6) to have in mind only the properties of the fruit. The correctness of this statement made by the serpent is nowhere called in question. If, then, the Deity in his first command refers to an inherent fatal quality of the tree, we are shut up to the conclusion that he makes a false representation for the purpose of deterring the man from eating. The supposition would then be that the supremacy of the god was connected with his exclusive possession of the tree, and that his only means of keeping control of it was to frighten man by telling him that death would result from partaking of its fruit. Such an old folk-tale is conceivable, and is not without parallels elsewhere. The objection may be urged to this interpretation that it does not fit well into other parts of the narrative. Why should God put the man in the garden, with free access to the tree, if he had no means of coercing him except through fear of the quality of the fruit? To this it may be replied that the man is ignorant of the great property of the tree till the serpent tells him what it really is, and that, under such circumstances, fear of consequences might be a sufficient deterrent. The subsequent fortunes of the man are explicable, under this interpretation, as belonging to another story, or as wrought out by a later time of more developed thought.

The other interpretation — namely, that the divine prohibition involves a threat to be carried out by God himself — is that which is contemplated by the narrative in its present form; that is, it is probably the sense which the editor attached to the words. True, he gives a different turn to the “thou shalt die,” but he regards the death as to be inflicted directly by God. The text is not clear as to how the human pair understood the penalty. In iii. 6, the woman and the man accept the serpent’s statement as if it quite removed the difficulty in the way of eating the fruit (a moral element in the woman’s de-

cision there is not) ; that is, as if the punishment had been supposed by them to reside in the fruit itself. On the other hand, the woman's plea that the serpent beguiled her (iii. 13) admits the obligation of obedience to the divine command. The serpent, she says, led her astray, tempting her to disobedience by holding out a great reward. But these two passages probably belong to different forms of the story, or different lines of tradition.

Whichever of these interpretations we adopt (and the choice between them is not easy), we must suppose a primitive story which has been worked over and modified by an editor or by successive generations of editors or critics. If in the original story the Deity threatened instant death, then we may suppose that death was inflicted ; and then, if the offender was the first man, a new creation would become necessary. With such an idea we may compare the rabbinical fancy that God's first attempt at creation was unsatisfactory. Our author, adopting this story, must then be supposed to have used it for his own end, which was to account for the fact of human death. That he, or the tradition from which he drew, should modify the original form of the history cannot be thought strange, nor that a discrepant remnant of the primitive story should be allowed to remain in the text. Such contradictions in a narrative are found elsewhere in the Old Testament. We may assume a similar procedure on the editor's part if the earlier story represented the Deity as making an untrue statement about the tree. He in that case modified the history to suit his own object. In either case, we have to recognize two points of view and two lines of tradition in the present narrative.

It must be added that iii. 23 may give a hint of a different form of the story, in which the punishment of disobedience was expulsion from the garden. It here appears as the beginning of the penalties announced in the preceding verses ; but verses 22-24 would follow naturally after verse 13.

The same supposition of an earlier, simpler story supplies a reasonable explanation of the other discrepancy above-mentioned, the difference in extent between the punishment threatened and that inflicted. Here also the author has treated his material freely. His object was to explain the suffering that attends birth and the toil that is inseparable from life ; and he finds the explanation in the story of a divine punishment affixed to an act of transgression, without troubling himself with the fact that death alone was threatened. He gathers

into one mass the chief miseries of life, and dates them from this divine decree. He assumes that they were not part of the original creation, that they must have been the result of a revolution, and this he attributes to a definite ordination of God. The ground, he holds, could not originally have produced thorns and thistles — there must have been a curse. Man must once have lived in happy ease — toil he thinks a curse; it is not that he means to deny the nobility of work (a question that probably had not occurred to him), he is simply concerned to explain that suffering which is a manifest evil. In like manner he is interested in accounting for the peculiarities of the serpent, a beast, which, in addition to its hostility to man, was mysterious in the respect that it moved without feet and fed on dust (Micah vii. 17).

If we regard the penalties described in chapter iii. as due to the reflections of the philosophic editor (or a current thought which he represents), we need not stop to inquire farther into his grounds for singling out these particular forms of punishment. This inquiry would interest us here only in so far as it might help to fix the date of the author. But the statements are too general to give very precise indications of time. Those which refer to the serpent, to birth, and to death might belong to any part of the prophetic period. And the nomadic hostility to agricultural life, which some see in the curse on the ground, remained in Israel down to the Exile (the Rechabites, Jer. xxxv.).

2. In the next place, we may provisionally distinguish the history of creation as a separate story, on the double ground that it is only introductory to our author's main thesis, and that a similar story is found in Babylonia. It is evident, as is remarked above, that the author's concern is with certain facts of life, in the explanation of which he finds it desirable to give a brief account of the creation for the purpose of introducing the actors in the chief event. It is certain that he did not invent this account. What he gives is doubtless what was held by a circle of his contemporaries, and it lay before him either in oral or in written form. It is possible that, as Ewald thinks, he has abbreviated the narration current in his time; but whether the present account is an abridgement or not, it is highly probable that so important a section of primeval history existed in separate form. The probability that such a narrative was known in some Israelitish circle is increased by Mr. Pinches's discovery (announced in *The Academy* of Nov. 29, 1890) of a new Babylonian version of the

creation-story. The Babylonian creation-texts hitherto published connect themselves, as is well known, rather with the account of Gen. i.; this newly discovered version shows resemblances to that of Gen. ii. The Babylonian version also may be an abridgement, but in any case the coincidences between the two are noteworthy. Both begin with the statement that no plant existed, and place the formation of man before that of plants and animals; in both there is mention of an abode of joy. This latter point becomes the more remarkable when we compare the expressions in Ezekiel, "Thou wast in Eden, the garden of God (xxviii. 13) thou wast on the holy mountain of God (ver. 14)," in which Eden is called "the garden of God," and identified with the "mountain of God," which can hardly be anything else than that mount of the north which was the abode of the gods, the North Semitic Olympus. With this agrees also the account in Genesis, where Yahwe plants a garden (it is not said that he planted it for man), in which he walks in the cool of the day as one walks in his private grounds. These resemblances between the two stories can hardly be accidental; either one was borrowed from the other, or the two come from a common source; which alternative is correct it is unnecessary to ask here. In any case it becomes probable that our author had before him a narrative of creation on which he has drawn as far as suited his purpose.

The cuneiform reading hardly helps to decide the question whether the topographical description of the garden (ii. 10-14) is an addition by an editor or belongs to the original form. The mention of the Tigris and the Euphrates in the Babylonian text may suggest some further geographical statement, but there is nothing definite in the material reported by Mr. Pinches. There is, however, just enough to make it better to reserve judgment on this point.

Nor is it easy to decide whether the account which lay before our author contained the story of the creation of woman. The naïveté of the account would make rather for than against an early date for it. That the animals were brought to the man to receive names, that among them was found none fit to be a help to him, and so it became necessary to create a special being as his companion, and that this being was formed from a rib of the man—these are ideas which might well belong to a very early stratum of thought. They are parallel in this respect to the conception of man's fashioning out of dust, an idea that probably has its roots in a far past. On the other hand, as

Reuss remarks, the correspondence between the mode of procedure in the creation of woman, and the popular expression "bone of my bones" is striking. The correspondence is not precise; the popular saying relates to any kinship, here it is applied specifically to the marriage relation, and this favors the view that the application was made by our author. We may, however, go back of the popular saying to the belief on which it rests, the belief that kinship implied literal physical identity. The first woman, standing in so near a relation to the man, would be held to be a part of his body. But it must be observed that the text lays stress on the etymology of the woman's name, she is *ishah* because she is taken from *ish*. Possibly this etymology suggested the history. It is not improbable that there existed some popular story of the creation of woman, which the author has used freely for the purpose of exalting the relation between husband and wife. On this point the Babylonian story gives us no light.

The moral drawn at the end of chap. ii. may also be taken to indicate that the creation-story was looked upon by the author as a separate history. He pauses to point out that a very important institution of society rests on this peculiarity of the creation of the woman, and thus appears to recognize the end of the first section of his history. On leaving this he broaches an entirely new side of the history, though he connects the two sections closely by the remark that the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

3. The main incident of the history is the transaction between the woman and the serpent and its immediate consequences (iii. 1-7).

The following paragraph may be regarded as more particularly the reflection of the author (verses 8-21), a dramatic rendering of an existing simpler story, worked up in accordance with later ideas. It is hard to draw the line of division here, because the author has very skilfully combined text and commentary. Verse 8 might be attached to the first part or the second, but a general difference between the two may be recognized. The first part is in substance a primitive story of a wonderful tree and a supernatural serpent — a snake-deity. It may be the more easily isolated because we find elsewhere similar mythical narratives, and because of certain discrepancies or inconcinnities in the story. Let us first look at the two chief figures, the tree and the serpent.

It is not necessary to mention the sacred trees of the various mythologies of the world; the principal facts are collected in the com-

mentaries of Kalisch and Dillmann and elsewhere. The tree of our narrative is not cosmic, nor is it simply consecrated to the deity; it is endowed with magical or supernatural powers. Its peculiar property is that it communicates to him who eats of its fruit the knowledge of good and evil. Such knowledge is not represented in the text as coming from moral discipline, from the recognition of obligation. The first pair are under the obligation of obedience from the moment that they are forbidden to eat; but they remain without knowledge up to the time that they taste the fruit, and then, in a moment, they are enlightened. This is not a moral, but a magical, effect; the tree has in itself a supernatural power, due to the residence in it of some divine energy. And the text gives us a hint of the origin of this special virtue. In the appendix at the end of chapter iii., Yahwe (apparently in consultation with the Elohim-beings) announces as a regrettable event that the man has become as a divine being. He thus repeats the affirmation of the serpent (iii. 5), and declares the divine virtue of the tree; and it is to guard the divine circle against further encroachments on man's part that he drives him from the garden. It thus appears that the tree is looked on by the Deity as his private property; in fact, as intimately connected with the possession of divine attributes. In some way, the divine life is in the tree; it is a divine tree. For this reason, perhaps, it is to be denied to man; there is a prohibition, with threatened penalty of death. Such a representation carries us back to an early stage of society; the story, whether it be old-Semitic or only old-Babylonian in origin, arose at a time when the belief existed that divinity resided in trees as well as in men; and it is here adopted by our author, and used as a vehicle for the lesson which he wished to impress.

Whether in the more primitive form of the story the virtue of the tree consisted in its imparting the knowledge of good and evil, may be doubted. Probably the situation was very simple. There was a garden, the special abode of the Deity, and in it a tree closely connected with his own life, and therefore, we may suppose, forbidden to man. In the absence of documentary evidence (which further Babylonian discoveries may perhaps supply), it is not possible to say precisely what the original Semitic conception of the tree was. It has been compared to the Indian soma, and the story has been supposed to express early man's wonder at the power and mystery of intoxicating drink. From the fact that the first effect of the fruit was

to awaken the sense of shame, it has been connected by recent writers with sexual ideas (so also Milton in *Paradise Lost*).¹ All that can be said is, that the idea was a simple and primitive one. The conception that it was related to the awakening of man's intelligence would naturally be later. The expression "knowledge of good and evil" means in the Old Testament in general that dawning of intelligence and reflection which marks the entrance of the child into the sphere of rational responsibility. It is used of sensuous, intellectual, and ethical perception (2 Sam. xix. 35; Isa. vii. 15; Deut. i. 39; Isa. v. 20); as, in general, the terms "good" and "evil" are employed in all these senses. It means the power of right judgment in general. Our author's conception is, that the beginning of true rationality in man was coincident with the incoming of the pains and toils of life—an idea which belongs rather to a later reflective stage of thought than to the primitive, myth-making time. Here, again, the finer conception of the power of the tree was probably due to the development of the story in later times; our author was the spokesman of his generation.

The two ideas of the forbidden tree and the golden age must be kept apart; they are not necessarily connected, and in our narrative there are indications, as we have seen, that they originally belonged to separate sections. And it is to be noted that the woman, when approached by the serpent, apparently does not know the qualities of the tree. Hence the probability that (as Budde remarks) its name did not stand in the earliest form of the command, in ii. 17; that is, that it was designated merely as "the tree which is in the midst of the garden." Further, the non-moral character of the woman's conduct is evident. So soon as she learns from the serpent (whose word she accepts without question) that she need not fear fatal consequences from eating the fruit, she is attracted both sensuously and intellectually by the tree. She sees that it is beautiful to look at, and that its fruit is good for food and wisdom-giving; she accordingly eats, and gives to the man. There is no sign of moral struggle or of moral consciousness. Here is an opportunity of enjoyment without suffering, and she seizes it. Neither she nor the man shows sense of guilt; they are only ashamed of being naked. All this belongs to the simple folk-story. But it is also evident that the author is not concerned with the origin of sin; he assumes capability of sin, and confines himself to describing the entrance of suffering into the world.

[¹ So, for example, August. *de civ. Dei*, 14, 20, sq.]

What is explained by the eating of the fruit is the origin of shame at nakedness, and of clothing. But the sense of shame is not connected with the sense of sin; there is no allusion in the text to such a connection. The author rather represents the case to himself thus: Clothing is one of the arts of civilized life, unknown in the primitive time of ignorant happiness, and must have come to the knowledge of man in some supernatural way — obviously through the taste of the magical fruit, which woke him from his state of childish bliss and ushered him into the struggles and pains of serious life. The author reasons from the feeling of his own time. The most palpable mark of distinction between civilized and uncivilized man is clothing, and to the civilized man the absence of clothing is occasion of shame. This sense of shame is not further analyzed by him; it is, he holds, an accompaniment of present civilization, and he therefore refers it to the tree.

Let us now turn to the serpent, and ask what part is assigned to him in the history. We have to observe, in the first place, that he, like the tree, is a supernatural being. Not only has he the gift of speech, but he is acquainted with the affairs of the garden, with the qualities of the tree and the result of eating its fruit, and speaks as if he were on terms of intimacy with the divine circle. "God knows," he says, as if he were in a position to say exactly what the Deity knew. Further, in our narrative he takes a position of antagonism to God, not uncertainly charging the Deity with misrepresentation. Afterwards, in the judgment pronounced on the offenders, he is degraded from his original state, made to go on his belly and eat dust, and condemned to perpetual war with man, with the condition that he is always to have the worst of it. Here several views seem to be combined. The serpent, at first a deity, ends by assuming the mere beast-form in which he is known to us. The judgment we may perhaps assume to come from our author, representing either his individual view, or that of a circle to which he belonged, or a tradition current in his time. So far as its content is concerned, however, it may be very early; it is a bit of folk-science, accounting for the peculiarities of the serpent by a direct divine act of transformation, and so assuming that these peculiarities did not originally belong to him. The preceding paragraph, in which the serpent in the present narrative plays the rôle of tempter, appears to form a separate story. Among the various serpents and dragons of the folk-lore of other

peoples, there seems to be none that has more than a general resemblance to the beast of Genesis.

There are indications in the narrative that there was an earlier story, in which the serpent was not malevolent. Nothing is said in iii. 1-7 of his being hostile to God or to man, and no motive is suggested for such a feeling on his part. So far as creation is concerned, he stands on the same footing as the other animals, differing from them only in being astuter than they. The word used to describe him in iii. 1 (עֲרִים) is employed throughout the book of Proverbs for prudence, intellectual wisdom, in the good sense (twice, in Job, in a bad sense), and there is no sign that it is otherwise employed here. What he says to the woman concerning the virtue of the tree, so far from being considered untrue in the narrative, is endorsed by God himself (iii. 22). The difficulty of explaining his conduct led early critics to identify him with the devil; but that is a mode of conception entirely foreign to our text. He has been brought into connection with the Babylonian serpent or dragon, Tiamat, who in one story is the enemy of the gods. But Tiamat is a figure wholly different from our serpent. She is the primeval abyss, the mother of the gods, and later, perhaps, the storm-cloud; her connections are with the *tehom* of Gen. i. 2; and now that we have a second Babylonian story (corresponding with that of Gen. ii., iii.) in which she seems to occur, it becomes still less probable that she belongs to the same line of mythical thought as the purely beast figure of the biblical narrative. She offers no ground for ascribing an originally hostile character to him.

It may, indeed, be said that a background of the story, not given by our author, must be assumed. The serpent is introduced abruptly; but he may be supposed to have a preceding history, which, if we knew it, would explain his attitude of antagonism. This must be allowed to be possible. Supposing such a fuller history, however, we should still naturally regard it as an independent story, incorporated into the complete narrative by our author or by the tradition from which he drew.

As the text stands, the more primitive story seems to have told merely how man was made acquainted with the virtues of a wonderful tree by a wise, supernatural serpent, and so came to know that he was naked, and was led to make himself clothing. Whether this was the exact form of the story — the history of the origin of clothing

—it is not possible to determine. The beginning of other arts of life may have been included. The suggestion of the simpler dress, that of leaves, may have come from the serpent, in contrast with which would then stand the completer dress of skin made by the Deity, the tunic over against the girdle or apron. But these are only surmises, and do not affect the main point, the separateness and concinnity of the narrative. Such a story of a benevolent serpent has parallels in the folk-lore of various simple communities, in which beasts play the part of civilizers. They arose at a time when no difficulty was felt in ascribing quasi-divine powers to the lower animals.

If a story of this sort existed among the Hebrews and other Semites at a very early time, the rôle of the serpent might have been modified in the course of generations by the progress of reflection on social and religious questions. If, for example, for any reason there had arisen a feeling of dissatisfaction with the arts of life considered as products of the agricultural form of society in contrast with the earlier nomadic state, the beginning of these arts would not unnaturally be looked on as an evil, and therefore as a punishment inflicted by the Deity. In that case, the instigator of the first movement, originally benevolent, would be converted into a transgressor and an enemy of God and man, and might play such a part as is assigned to the serpent of Genesis. A late writer adopting this new conception and assuming the evil of the transaction might then give the story nearly in its old form, only introducing such expressions as were necessary to bring out the fact of a transgression of a divine command.

If the view above expressed of the original nature of tree and serpent be correct, the basis of the story is to be sought in a remote past. The two figures may have stood together from the first, or may originally have formed the centres of separate stories and been afterwards combined. On the general ground that the simpler form of a story is likely to be the earlier, we might be disposed to conclude that they were originally separate, but here we pass into a region which lies in great measure beyond all accessible data; the origin of most myths is unknown; even in the lowest tribes we find comparatively elaborate narratives the origin and combination of whose elements are lost in the depths of antiquity. Parallels from non-Semitic sources might be adduced in support of both suppositions, for the primitive separateness or for the primitive union of the stories of serpent and tree. Certain and positive Semitic parallels we have not.

The Babylonian seal with tree, serpent, and two anthropomorphic figures, though it is held by such high authorities as George Smith and Dr. Wm. Hayes Ward to represent the scene described in Gen. iii., seems to be of doubtful meaning, since the two figures have the mark of deity. At present our story stands alone in Semitic folklore. Considering the time when our author wrote (certainly in a period well advanced in thought) it seems more likely that he found the serpent and the tree combined in one narrative.

The divine prohibition might be regarded as originally connected with the tree (as is suggested above), or as an addition of a later conception. This part of the history has been compared with the anger of Zeus when Prometheus taught men the use of fire. The two stories have in common the central idea that the Deity looks with disfavor on man's first attempts at gaining the arts of life. A similar idea is perhaps to be recognized in the legend or myth of the tower of Babel, in which the fear and anger of the Deity are aroused by the attempt of the builders to effect a firm organization and guard themselves against the danger of dispersion. How men came upon the idea that the supreme supernatural powers were opposed to human progress it is not easy to say. At the bottom of such a feeling lay, perhaps, the recollection of the struggle of life. It might seem to early thinkers that the feebleness of man's resources could be due only to the jealous opposition of the gods. Or, possibly, the acquisition of so notable a thing as fire, for example, bestowed by a friendly Deity was naturally looked on as the occasion of strife between two great opposing powers. It is more likely that the true explanation is simpler than these. However that may be, the hypothesis of divine jealousy is a possible one. The text allows the supposition that the tree was forbidden man because his emergence into a rational state was feared or on some ground thought undesirable. Something like this is suggested in the appendix when the man is driven away from the tree of life; but this statement must be treated separately, and it is not certain that it can be adduced as showing the point of view either of the editor of the main narrative or of the primitive story of the prohibition.

The other view, namely, that the tree is prohibited because it is closely connected with the life of the Deity, seems on the whole to fit better into the narrative. It presents not a higher but rather a lower conception of the Deity's character, since he is represented as selfishly

concerned with his own interests ; but such a conception is common in very early stories. The words of the serpent to the woman appear to favor this interpretation. According to him, God knows that the result of eating the fruit will be the elevation of man to equality with the gods, and the apprehension of the Deity would relate not to man's advance in civilization, but to his encroachment on the sphere of divine life ; or, to state the situation more nearly as early man probably conceived it, the God was the possessor of a garden in which was a wonderful divine tree with which his life was connected, and which, therefore, he was unwilling to share with the man.

Our author, taking this story up into his narrative, treats it in a very different way. He represents the prohibition simply as a divine command, suggesting no reason for it. It is thus really put by him as an arbitrary act of power, but this is not his intention. With this side of the transaction he is not concerned. He makes the transgression, to which the prohibition is a necessary antecedent, the explanation of certain phenomena of life. He is content to adopt the fact of prohibition without seeking its ground. He may seem to be not quite clear in his mind as to the real character either of the tree or of the transgression, for he ascribes to the eating of the fruit results seemingly both good and bad ; on the one hand, the acquisition of clothing represented as the invention of man and also as the gift of God ; and on the other hand, certain evils represented as a punishment from God. The simplest explanation of this seeming inconcinnity is that the immediate good results, the man's invention of clothing, belongs to the earlier form of the story, while the detailed mention of punishments and of the divine gift of clothing represents the idea of the author. We are thus led by the internal evidence to regard iii. 8-19 as a separate section. Verse 20 may be taken to be the insertion of some editor, perhaps of him to whom we owe similar etymologies in ii. 23, iv. 1, 25, v. 29. Then verse 21, in which God himself bestows clothing, may be regarded as our author's modified acceptance of the original statement. Clothing he could not but consider as a necessity of civilized life, and since man by eating the fruit had entered on his new career, he represents the Deity as giving man, out of regard for his comfort, a better sort of clothing than he had been able to devise. Thus, in our author's view, the real beginning of the arts of life comes not immediately through the tree, but by the kindness of God.

The concluding paragraph, iii. 22-24, seems to be composite. The

expulsion from the garden probably belonged to an early form of the main story; after the transgression it was natural that the offender should be driven away. But the special reason assigned for his banishment, the fear that he would eat of the fruit of the tree of life, connects itself with an independent story which has here been woven into the narrative, probably by some other writer than our main author. The reasons for this view are given briefly above. Inquiry into the origin of this story would lead us too far from our point. It may be remarked that the second tree, like the first, has a supernatural quality; its fruit gives bodily immortality. It may be a differentiation of the other, or it may have arisen independently. As is remarked above, it plays no rôle in the history except this negative one, and the only natural explanation of its presence seems to be that it also is connected with the life of the Deity.

The figures of the cherubim give support to the suggestion that the garden is the special abode of the Deity. They are of the same nature with the Babylonian-Assyrian bull-deities (*shidu*) who guard the approach to temples and palaces. They may be old-Hebrew or old-Canaanitish (Phoenician) since they occur (1 Kings vi. 23) in Solomon's temple as guardians of the innermost shrine. They may thus have stood in the garden-story as it was known to our author, whether he wrote before, during, or after the exile.

The result of our examination is that the author or chief redactor of Gen. ii., iii. had before him a narrative or narratives in which was recounted the creation of the world and of man, and the expulsion of man from a happy garden in which stood a forbidden tree, and to this story he added his own reflections. The data hardly enable us to decide whether there were two narratives or one, that is, whether the creation-story and the serpent story had already been combined into one when they came to his knowledge, or the combination was made by him. In any case it is probable that they were originally distinct, and were united by some later circle of thinkers.

In the creation-story as it now stands in Genesis (and in the cuneiform literature) there are signs of union of different accounts. It contains primitive conceptions and doubtless represents a growth of many generations, but it had already, when our author found it, received a well-rounded shape, and it would lead us too far to seek the origin of its various elements.

On the changes which the serpent story may have undergone from

time to time it is not possible to pronounce definitely from our text. It is not clear, for example, whether the tree of the garden was that with which the serpent was originally connected. If future discoveries in Babylonian material should show a forbidden tree and a serpent in the garden of the gods, we should with probability conclude that all these figures had been united by the early mythologists into one narrative. But even then it would remain likely that the serpent once formed the centre of a separate history, in which he appeared as civilizer. It was, we may reasonably hold, some later process of thought that converted him into a tempter. It may be surmised that at some time, unknown to us, the history of the forbidden tree in the garden of the gods was combined with that of the enlightening tree of the serpent, and the two were gradually fused into one by a religious thought which felt it necessary to subordinate all things to the Deity, while it traced human toil and death to an act of transgression. This combined story (in which the creation-history was included) was taken by our author and interpreted in his own manner. The way in which the penalty was treated by him is discussed above. In thus assuming an author or editor it is not meant to say that he individually invented this treatment. He may be regarded as embodying a traditional thought which had grown up by the reflection of generations on the phenomena in question.

After this main story was completed, it would seem, the tree of life was introduced, made to account for the expulsion in iii. 22, and inserted unskilfully in ii. 9. That such a tree belonged to a later Old Testament thought may perhaps be inferred from Prov. iii. 18, xi. 30, xiii. 12, xv. 4, and from Ezek. xlvii. 12, (the tree in which passage is regarded in Rev. xxii. 2 as a tree of life), though it is to be observed that a "fountain of life" is similarly spoken of (Ps. xxxvi. 10 [9], Prov. x. 11, xiii. 14 xiv. 27). Ezekiel (xlvii. comp. Rev. xxii. 1) has a river of life, and the expression "path of life" occurs in Psalms and Proverbs — all these may be mere figures of speech. If, however, there did exist among the Jews a tradition or myth of a tree of life, we are hardly in position to say whether it was old-Hebrew material or was got from Babylon during or after the exile, or from Assyria before that time.